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BY

(10) DAVID T. CHUANG, JAMES J. CHEN AND MELVIN R. NOVICK

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This paper provides necessary and sufficient conditions for the existence of a cut-score for arbitrary utility functions. Classical theories of monitone likelihood ratios and stochastically increasing distribution are extended to provide the necessary theory of monitone posterior ratios, which provides a sufficiency condition. Necessity is studied in individual cases. In general, only modest sample sizes and avoidance of situations with extreme cut-scores is necessary.

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Theory and Practice For the Use of

Cut Scores for Personnel Decisions

David T. Chuang, James J. Chen and Melvin R. Novick

The University of Iowa

Cut-scores are commonly used in industrial personnel selection, academic selection, minimum competence certification testing, and professional licensing, using simple and multiple-person/multiple-job category decision paradigms. Previous approaches have proposed cut-score solutions in a variety of applications (Gross and Su, 1975; Novick and Lindley, 1978, 1979; Petersen, 1976; and Van der Linden and Mellenbergh, 1977) using threshold , normal ogive, linear and discrete utility functions. This paper considers these results by investigating conditions on the posterior, likelihood and utility functions required for a cut-score to be valid. The result is the showing that cut-scores are appropriate in a wide range of applications, but they are less than universally appropriate. Following this a general paradigm and computational algorithm for cut-score solutions is developed under the assumption that the conditions for a cut-score have been satisfied.

Introduction

In a decision problem, a Bayesian has a probability distribution over the states of nature and a utility function over actions and states. A Bayesian makes a decision by maximizing expected utility. Applications of Bayesian decision theory to personnel selection have recently been studied by Cross and Su (1975), Novick and Petersen (1976), Novick and Lindley (1978, 1979), Petersen (1976), Petersen and Novick (1976) and Van der Linden and Mellenbergh (1977). All except Novick and Lindley (1978, 1979) assume utility functions are threshold or linear, and the likelihood functions used are also limited. In this paper we study personnel decision problems using more general utility and likelihood functions.

In section one of this paper we discuss the likelihood functions and prior distributions we shall use. We show that the stochastic increasing (SI) property for the posterior distribution is a necessary and sufficient condition for a cut-score for an <u>arbitrary</u> utility function. As a special case, we study likelihood functions satisfying monotone likelihood ratio (MLR), a condition studied extensively in Karlin and Rubin (1956), Karlin (1957a, 1957b), Lehmann (1959) and DeGroot (1970). We define the monotone posterior ratio (MPR) property and show that it implies the stochastically increasing property; thus it implies a cut-score for an arbitrary utility function. We also show that MLR implies MPR with any prior distribution.

In section two we note that most posterior and predictive densities do not satisfy the MPR or SI properties, but show that in important cases cut-scores are appropriate provided that discrimination is not required in the tails of the distribution. In particular we carefully study the posterior "t' distribution obtained with many Bayesian normal models.

In section three we provide a very general multi-person/ multi-job category paradigm appropriate for a wide variety selection, guidance and classification applications. By assuming the appropriate- ness of cut-scores based on the theory and restrictions of section 2 we are able to provide simple computational algorithms for the general paradigm.

In this paper, we use the following notation. We use N to denote the total number of applicants. Θ is the parameter we are interested in and $T(x_i)$ is the test score of the ith applicant. A job performance score is denoted by y_i. In one context we use A,B,C,....R to represent the names of jobs that have openings. $U_A(\theta)$, $U_B(\theta)$, $U_C(\theta)$, ...$U_R(\theta)$ are the utilities of assigning an applicant with ability θ to jobs A,B,C,... and R respectively. The expected utility of assigning a person with test score $T(x)$ to a job, say A, is $E(U_A(\theta))$, which is a function of $T(x)$. The indicated expectation is with respect to the Bayes distribution for θ. We let $V_A(T(x)) \equiv E(U_A(\theta))$. This notation emphasizes that V does not depend on θ. An optimal decision procedure is a procedure that maximizes the sum of expected utilities of the selection across all persons to be selected. In another context the utility function is defined over the performance scores y. The utilities are then $U_A(y),..., U_R(y)$ and expectations are taken with respect to the posterior predictive distribution for y. All results are valid whether the focus is on the unobservable ability (θ) or the observable performance y.

Likelihood Function and Prior Distribution

Let θ be a person's ability (or a measure of performance), and $T(x)$ be his test score. It may be reasonable to desire that if one person has a higher test score than another then the statistical analysis will provide some evidence that the first person's ability is not less than the second, all else being equal. Thus it may be reasonable to desire that the densities $p(x|\theta)$ have monotone likelihood ratio (MLR).

Definition 1: The real parameter family of densities $p(x|\theta)$ is said to have monotone likelihood ratio if there exists a real-valued function $T(x)$ such that for any $\theta_1 < \theta_2$ the likelihood functions $p(x|\theta_2)$ and $p(x|\theta_1)$ are distinct and the ratio $p(x|\theta_2)/p(x|\theta_1)$ is a non-decreasing function of $T(x)$. The MLR condition is a particular technical requirement which implies that increasing values of $T(x)$ will provide increasing evidence from the likelihood that θ_2 is greater than θ_1 when in fact $\theta_2 > \theta_1$.

It can be shown that the exponential family, (normal, binomial, Poisson, exponential, etc.) and some other widely used distributions have MLR. This condition is not satisfied by all distributions (e.g. the predictive distribution of Student's t from linear regression); however, in such cases it may be except for extreme values of $T(x)$. Monotone likelihood ratio is generally an easy condition to verify.

From a decision theory point of view, we consider θ as a random variable and define a similar ratio monotonicity condition for such distributions.

Definition 2: The class of posterior densities $p(\theta|x)$ is said to have monotone posterior ratio (MPR) if there exists a real valued function $T(x)$ such that for any $T(x_1) < T(x_2)$ the posterior distributions $p(\theta|T(x_1))$ and $p(\theta|T(x_2))$ are distinct and the ratio $p(\theta|T(x_2))/p(\theta|T(x_1))$ is a non-decreasing function of θ.

We can see definition 2 is exactly the same as definition 1 except the roles of θ and $T(x)$ are exchanged. The suggestion here is that for any prior distribution, higher values of $T(x)$ will be suggestive of higher values for θ in the posterior distribution. The following lemma establishes this condition for MPR.

Lemma 1: Suppose $p(\theta)$ is any prior distribution and $f(x|\theta)$ has MLR in the statistic $T(x)$, then the posterior distribution $p(\theta|x)$ of θ has MPR with statistic $T(x)$.

Proof: By definition $p(\theta|x) = \dfrac{p(\theta)\,f(x|\theta)}{\int p(\theta)f(x|\theta)d\theta}$

Then the posterior likelihood ratio is

$$\frac{p(\theta|x_2)}{p(\theta|x_1)} = \frac{p(\theta)f(x_2|\theta)}{\int p(\theta)f(x_2|\theta)d\theta} \cdot \frac{\int p(\theta)f(x_1|\theta)d\theta}{p(\theta)f(x_1|\theta)}$$

$$= \frac{\int p(\theta)f(x_1|\theta)d\theta}{\int p(\theta)f(x_2|\theta)d\theta} \cdot \frac{f(x_2|\theta)}{f(x_1|\theta)}$$

By definition of MLR, we know for any two values $\theta_1 < \theta_2$ and $T(x_1) < T(x_2)$ that

$$\frac{f(x_1|\theta_2)}{f(x_1|\theta_1)} \leq \frac{f(X_2|\theta_2)}{f(x_2|\theta_1)}$$

and thus $\dfrac{f(x_2|\theta_1)}{f(x_1|\theta_1)} \leq \dfrac{f(x_2|\theta_2)}{f(x_1|\theta_2)}$.

Since x_1, x_2, θ_1, and θ_2 are all <u>fixed</u> we can write this as

$$\frac{p(\theta_1 | x_2)}{p(\theta_1 | x_1)} \le \frac{p(\theta_2 | x_2)}{p(\theta_2 | x_1)}$$

and conclude that $p(\theta|x)$ has monotone posterior ratio.

In this paper we generally use the same prior distribution for every applicant. This is appropriate when the applicants have the same kind of background. If the applicants are from different groups we might use different prior distribution for the applicants from different groups. The force of this lemma is that with identical prior distributions an ordering on $T(x)$ produces the same ordering as would an investigation of probability ratios from the posterior distribution.

While MLR and MPR are useful conditions, a weaker condition is adequate for our purposes.

Definition 3: A posterior distribution is said to be stochastically increasing (SI) in the statistic T if $T(x_1) \geq T(x_2)$ and for all θ we have $F_{T(x_1)}(\theta) \leq F_{T(x_2)}(\theta)$, where $F_{T(x_1)}(\theta)$ and $F_{T(x_2)}(\theta)$ are the cumulative posterior distributions of θ with observations $T(x_1)$ and $T(x_2)$ respectively.

The theorem that follows is the foundation of this paper. We will use properties of this theorem throughout the paper.

Theorem 1: Let $g(\theta)$ be an arbitrary non-decreasing function of θ, then $E[g(\theta)|T(x)]$ is a non-decreasing function of $T(x)$ if and only if the posterior distribution is stochastically increasing in $T(x)$.
Proof: We first assume that $T(x_1) \geq T(x_2)$ and for all θ we have $F_{T(x_1)}(\theta) \leq F_{T(x_2)}(\theta)$. Proof of sufficiency then follows the argument given by Lehmann (1959, p. 114). We now extend this work and demonstrate necessity.

Assume for any $g(\theta)$, $E[g(\theta)|T(x)]$ is a non-decreasing function of $T(x)$. In particular we assume:

$$g(\theta) = \begin{cases} -1 & \text{if } \theta \leq \theta^* \\ 0 & \text{if } \theta > \theta^*, \end{cases}$$

then $E[g(\theta)|T(x)] = -F_{T(x)}(\theta^*)$.

Thus when $T(x_1) \geq T(x_2)$, we have $-F_{T(x_1)}(\theta) \geq -F_{T(x_2)}(\theta^*)$.
In above θ^* is any $\theta \epsilon \Omega$, thus for any θ and $T(x_1) \geq T(x_2)$ we have $F_{T(x_1)}(\theta) \leq F_{T(x_2)}(\theta)$.

A posterior distribution satisfying MPR also satisfies SI. (Lehmann's proof for MLR requires only trivial modification for this case.) Thus we have the following corollary:

Corollary 1: Suppose $f(x|\theta)$ has MLR with statistic $T(x)$ and $g(\theta)$ is a non-decreasing function of θ, then $E[g(\theta)|T(x)]$ is a non-

decreasing function of $T(x)$. (Similarly if $h(\theta)$ is a non-increasing

function of θ, then $E[h(\theta)|T(x)]$ is a non-increasing function of $T(x)$).

In application $g(\theta)$ will be a utility function $U(\theta)$ and we will refer

to this property as the monotone expected utility (MEU) property. The

force of this corollary is that a cut-score (CS) x^* can be set is guaranteed.

For if θ has MPR and $T(x_2) \leq T(x^*) \leq T(x_1)$,

then $E[g(\theta)|T(x_2)] \leq E[g(\theta)|T(x^*)] \leq E[g(\theta)|T(x_1)]$.

Thus, in summary, we have for an arbitrary utility function

$$\text{MLR} \Rightarrow \text{MPR} \Rightarrow \text{SI} \Leftrightarrow \text{MEU} \Leftrightarrow \text{CS}$$

Cut Scores for Specific Models

The weakness in the theory of the previous section is that many

posterior distributions are not MPR or SI. Specifically in a wide

range of applications the posterior marginal distribution will be "t".

The following analysis demonstrates that these "t" distributions are

not SI or MPR and that the use of a cut-score is not necessarily

justified in all cases.

Consider the simple linear regression model,

$$y = \alpha + \beta x + e$$

The value α and β are respectively the intercept and slope of the linear

regression function. y is the performance ability and x is the test

score which is the same as t in the previous sections. Following the

development of Petersen (1976) we assume that the variance of the error is homoscedastic, i.e.,

$$Var(y \mid x) = \sigma^2$$

for all x. We also assume that e is normally distributed for fixed α, β and x.

Suppose that α, β and $\log \sigma$ are uniformly and independently distributed. Given n pairs of observations (x,y) the posterior predictive distribution y for an applicant with the score $X = x_0$ has a Student t distribution of (n-2) degrees freedom, specifically, (Novick and Jackson, 1974) given $X = x_0$,

$$\frac{y - [\bar{y} + \hat{\beta} (x_0 - \bar{x})]}{s[\dfrac{n + 1}{n} + \dfrac{(x_0 - \bar{x})^2}{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})^2}]^{1/2}} : t(n-2) \qquad (1)$$

where $\bar{x} = \Sigma x/n$ $\bar{y} = \Sigma y/n$ $S_x^2 = \Sigma(x - \bar{x}^2)$, $S_y^2 = \Sigma(y - \bar{y})^2$, $S_{xy} = \Sigma(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})$, $\hat{\beta} = S_{xy}/S_x^2$ and $s^2 = (S_y^2 - S_{xy}^2/S_x^2)/(n - 2)$.

Let y^* be the minimum level of satisfactory performance for a threshold utility, then for a given test score $X = x_0$ the expected utility is

$$E[U(y) \mid x_0] = Pr(Y > y^* \mid x_0)$$

$$= 1 - Pr \left\{ t \leq \frac{y^* - [\bar{y} + \hat{\beta} (x_0 - \bar{x})]}{s[\dfrac{n + 1}{n} + \dfrac{(x_0 - \bar{x})^2}{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})^2}]^{1/2}} \right\} \qquad (2)$$

where t is the standard student t variable with (n - 2) degrees of freedom.

To see that the posterior predictive distribution of the student t variable in (1) does not have SI. Let

$$g(x_0) = \frac{y^* - [\bar{y} + \hat{\beta}(x_0 - \bar{x})]}{s[\frac{n+1}{n} + \frac{(x_0 - \bar{x})^2}{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})^2}]^{1/2}}$$

Equation (2) shows that the expected utility increases as $g(x_0)$ decreases. Therefore, the cut-score can be set if $E[U(y) \mid x_0]$ is a decreasing function of x_0. Taking the derivative of $g(x_0)$ we get

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x_0} g(x_0) = \frac{-(y^* - \bar{y}) \frac{(x_0 - \bar{x})}{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})^2} - \hat{\beta} \frac{n+1}{n}}{s[\frac{n+1}{n} + \frac{(x_0 - x)^2}{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})^2}]^{3/2}}$$

Setting $\frac{\partial}{\partial x_0} g(x_0) \leq 0$, we have

$$-(y^* - \bar{y}) \frac{(x_0 - \bar{x})}{(x - \bar{x})^2}2 \leq \hat{\beta} \frac{n+1}{n}$$

or $\quad -(y^* - \bar{y})(x_0 - \bar{x}) \leq \frac{n+1}{n} \Sigma(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})$ $\qquad$ (3)

as the condition required for a cut score. Consider

(i) $\quad y^* = \bar{y}$, then (3) is equivalent to

$\quad 0 \leq \Sigma(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})$

In this case a cut score can be set if the corrected sum of cross products (or the slope of the regression line) is non-negative. Now consider

ii) $\quad y^* \neq \bar{y}$ then (3) becomes

$$x_0 \geq \bar{x} - \frac{n+1}{n} \cdot \frac{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{y^* - \bar{y}} \qquad \text{for } y^* > \bar{y}, \qquad (4)$$

and

$$x_0 \leq \bar{x} + \frac{n+1}{n} \cdot \frac{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\bar{y} - y^*} \qquad \text{for } y^* < \bar{y} \qquad (5)$$

Combining (i) and (ii) for any arbitrary threshold utility y^*, a cut score can be set if

$$\bar{x} - \frac{n+1}{n}\ \frac{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{|y^* - \bar{y}|} \leq x_0 \leq \bar{x} + \frac{n+1}{n}\ \frac{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{|y^* - \bar{y}|}$$

(6)

or

$$|x_0 - \bar{x}| \leq \frac{n+1}{n}\ \frac{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{|y^* - \bar{y}|}$$

(7)

The equation (7) can be expressed as

$$\frac{|x_0 - \bar{x}|}{s_x}\ \frac{|y^* - \bar{y}|}{s_y} \leq (n+1)\ r$$

(8)

where r is the sample correlation coefficient for (x,y) and

$$s_x = \left(\frac{S_x^2}{n}\right)^{1/2} \quad \text{and} \quad s_y = \left(\frac{S_y^2}{n}\right)^{1/2}.$$

This shows that a cut-score can be set unless n is small, r is small, y^* is distant from $\bar{y}$ and there are x values very distant from $\bar{x}$. This condition may be satisfied for some scores in the case of high selectivity.

The 1968 data on college 7 for junior college test scores from the American College Testing (ACT) Program will be used for the example. The y variable is the first semester grade-point average (GPA) and the predictor variable x is English test score. Since most colleges require

a minimum 2.00 for graduation we set $y^* = 2.00$. The original data contain

105 observations. For the purpose of the example we picked the first

10 observations. For $n = 105$, $\bar{x} = 19.13$, $\bar{y} = 2.28$, $s_x^2 = 2766.13$,

$s_y^2 = 84.34$, $S_{xy} = 235.47$, $\hat{\beta} = 0.085$, $s = 0.79$ and $D = 849$; for $n = 10$,

$\bar{x} = 22.1$, $\bar{y} = 2.66$, $s_x^2 = 140.9$, $s_y^2 = 6.4$, $S_{xy} = 5.54$, $\hat{\beta} = 0.039$,

$s = 0.88$ and $D = 9$,

where
$$D = \frac{n+1}{n} \frac{\Sigma(x-\bar{x})(y-\bar{y})}{|y^*-y|}$$

Since the range for ACT English Scores is from 0 to 36, for $n = 105$,

the condition in (5) is satisfied for all x_0; therefore, a cut score can

be set and the expected utility is an increasing function of the test

score. For $n = 10$, the condition in (5) is violated for $x_0 \geq 32$; hence

setting a cut score is infeasible. Table 1 contains the values of the

expected utility for each sample for $x_0 = 0(2)36$. For $n = 105$, the

expected utility is increasing in test score x_0; however, for $n=10$,

the expected utility increases and then decreases at $x_0 = 32$. Hence a

cut-score cannot be set.

Insert Table 1 about here

It is possible to treat a more general class of utility functions

in precisely the same way. Suppose that the utility of selecting a

person of ability y is a normal ogive. Let μ_0 and σ_0^2 be the mean and

variance for this ogive so that

$$U(y) = \Phi\left(\frac{(y - \mu_0)}{\sigma_0}\right)$$

If n is large the t distribution in (1) is approximated by a normal variable with mean $\bar{y} + \hat{\beta}(x_0 - \bar{x})$ and variance

$$s^2\{[(n + 1)/n] + [(x_0 - \bar{x})^2 / \Sigma(x - \bar{x})^2]\}.$$

The expected utility (Novick and Lindley, 1979) of selecting a person with score x_0 is then

$$EU(y) = \Phi\left[\frac{\bar{y} + \hat{\beta}(x_0 - x) - \mu_0}{\left(\sigma_0^2 + s^2\left[\frac{(n + 1)}{n} + \frac{(x_0 - \bar{x})^2}{\Sigma(x - \bar{x})^2}\right]\right)^{1/2}}\right]$$

Following the techniques used previously, the condition for which the cut-score can be set is

$$\frac{|x_0 - \bar{x}|}{s_x} \frac{|\mu_0 - \bar{y}|}{s_y} \leq r(n + 1) + r\left(\frac{\sigma_0}{s}\right)^2 \tag{9}$$

This result may be compared with (8) noting that in the special case $\sigma_0 = 0$ the two expressions agree. For the previous example (n=10) (9) will be satisfied provided $\sigma_0 > 0.58$. Threshold utility is a special case of normal ogive utility with $\sigma_0 = 0$ and thus it is seen to be the "worst case". This may generally be true though we offer no proof for other ogival forms.

In a recent topical issue of the Journal of Educational Measurement there was some controversy over the issue of whether or not the setting of cut-scores was feasible. One paper (Glass, 1978) was very pessimistic, another was very optimistic (Hambleton, 1978). Others were less firmly committed on this point. All of the discussions in these papers seemed to be in the context of threshold utility, though it was not always apparent that a clear distinction was being made between the minimum criterion level θ^* in threshold utility and the cut-score x^* in the observation space. Criticism (Glass, 1978) of attempts to specify a threshold cut θ^* seem valid as they are effectively criticisms of threshold utility which Novick and Lindley (1978) clearly suggest is no better than a first rough approximation to a realistic utility function.

The point of the present paper is that cut-scores generally do exist and can be rationally specified to the extent that utility functions can be accurately specified. They do not depend on the assumption of threshold utility. Only the lesser assumptions of monotone likelihood ratio, stochastic increase, or the demonstration of monotone expected utility locally for the particular likelihood, prior distributions and utilities are needed. Thus a focus of work ought to be on the development of coherent bias-free methods of assessing utilities. In this connection a recent discussion by Novick, Chuang, and DeKeyrel (in press) seems relevant The counter argument to this is that the utility of selection often cannot be related to available criteria and that the more important factors needed to be evaluated less formally. This paper does not contribute to the debate on this point but does argue that other problems are manageable.

Selection for a Single Job Category

In this section we consider that there are N candidates applying for one job category A, that has openings. We will study optimal selection procedures for quota free and restricted models.

Suppose job A has openings and let the utility of accepting someone with ability θ be $U_A(\theta)$ and the utility of rejecting someone with ability θ be $U_R(\theta)$. In the case of personnel selections, the greater the ability of the candidate the greater will be his value to potential employers. We may assume that $U_A(\theta)$ is a non-decreasing function of θ and $U_R(\theta)$ is a non-increasing, constant, or more slowly increasing function of θ than $U_A(\theta)$. Then the marginal utility of selection, $U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta)$, is a non-decreasing function of θ.

Theorem 2: Under the conditions of theorem 1. If $U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta)$ is a non-decreasing function of θ then there exists a cut-score $T(x^*)$ such that

$$E[U_A(\theta) \mid T(x)] \geq E[U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)] \text{ for } T(x) > T(x^*)$$

and

$$E[U_A(\theta) \mid T(x)] \leq E[U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)] \text{ for } T(x) < T(x^*)$$

In extreme cases $T(x^*)$ may equal $-\infty$ or $+\infty$.

The above result is a special case of a theorem in Karlin and Rubin (1956). The proofs can be found in Lehmann (1959, p. 74). The importance of this theorem is that the existence of cut-score is derived rather than assumed. Thus in the case of monotone posterior ratio and monotone utility functions a cut score can always be used to maximize utility.

Theorem 2 shows that if the applicant's test score $T(x)$ is greater then $T(x^*)$ then the expected utility for acceptance is higher than rejection (hence he should be accepted). This is equivalent to saying that the expectation of $U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta)$ is non-negative, that is,

$$E[U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)] \geq 0 \quad \text{for } T(x) > T(x^*).$$

Similarly, we have

$$E[U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)] \leq 0 \quad \text{for } T(x) < T(x^*).$$

Therefore, the cut score $T(x^*)$ is the point at which $E[U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)]$ changes sign; that is, $E[U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)]$ changes from nonpositive values to nonnegative values at $T(x^*)$.

In particular, if $E[U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)]$ is continuous at $T(x^*)$ then

$$E[U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x^*)] = 0.$$

The following theorem shows that under our conditions, if we have two applicants and exactly one opening we should accept the one with the higher test score.

<u>Theorem 3</u>: Under the conditions of the theorem 1. If $U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta)$ is a non-decreasing function of θ and $T(x_i) > T(x_j)$, then

$$V_A(T(x_i)) + V_R((x_j)) \geq V_A(T(x_j)) + V_R(T(x_i)),$$

where $V_A(T(x)) \equiv E[U_A(\theta) \mid T(x)]$ and $V_R(T(x)) \equiv E[U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)]$

<u>Proof</u>: By Theorem 1, $E[U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)]$ is a non-decreasing function of $T(x)$. Thus,

$$E[U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x_i)] \geq E[U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x_j)]$$

so

$$V_A(T(x_i)) - V_R(T(x_i)) \geq V_A(T(x_j)) - V_R(T(x_j)),$$

then

$$V_A(T(x_i) + V_R(T(x_j)) \geq V_A(T(x_j)) + V_R(T(x_i)).$$

Assume that the test scores of N applicants are $T(x_1)$, $T(x_2)$, ...

$T(x_N)$, without loss of generality we can assume $T(x_1) \geq T(x_2), \ldots$

$\geq T(x_N)$. For job category A we may have three situations:

(1) quota free, i.e., we may accept as many applicants as we want;

(2) we want to accept <u>exactly</u> N_A applicants where $N_A \leq N$;

(3) we want to accept <u>at most</u> N_A applicants where $N_A \leq N$.

Note that if $N_A = N$ then (3) specializes to (1). The decision rules for these cases are very simple. From Theorem 2 there exists a cut-score, say C, such that

$$V_A(T(x)) \geq V_R(T(x)) \quad \text{for } T(x) > C$$

and

$$V_A(T(x)) \leq V_R(T(x)) \quad \text{for } T(x) < C$$

then

(a) The optimal decision procedure for situation (1) is to accept the i-th applicant if $T(x_i) > C$ and reject him if $T(x_i) < C$.

(b) The optimal decision procedure for situation (2) is to accept those N_A applicants who have the highest test scores (i.e., accept those who have scores $T(x_1), T(x_2) \ldots T(x_{N_A})$).

(c) The optimal decision procedure for situation (3) is: if $T(x_{N_A}) \geq C$ then accept the first N_A applicants, i.e., the same as (b); if $T(x_{N_A}) < C$ then we will accept applicants whose scores are greater than C, i.e., the same as in (a).

<u>Proof</u>:
(a) is trivial, because we maximize our utility of assigning each applicant; thus we have maximum total utility.

(b) is a direct extension of Theorem 3. If we exchange our decision about any two applicants, we can see by Theorem 3 our total expected utility will not increase. Thus we have optimal decision procedure.

(c) is a combination of (a) and (b) and we can see the procedure
is optimal immediately.

Again we emphasize that this theorem is generally false in the
absence of SI but the use of a cut-score may be valid with reasonable
practice. We also note that while we assume $U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta)$ is
nondecreasing in θ we are not assuming that the derivative $U_A'(\theta)$ is
nondecreasing in θ . In particular the following schematic is valid
and should be considered typical.
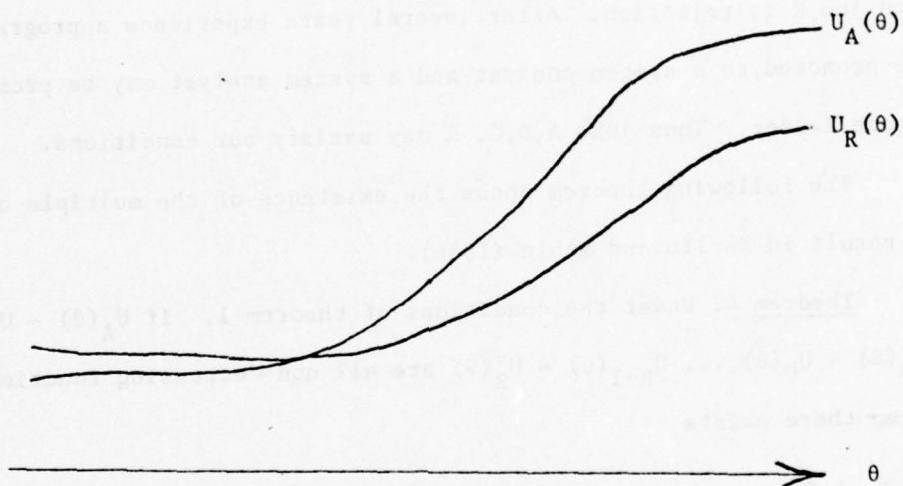
Figure 1 $U_A(\theta) - U_R(\theta)$

Selection for Multiple Job Categories

In this part we consider that jobs A, B, C, ... R have openings.
We also assume there are N applicants and the utility of assigning
someone with ability θ to jobs A, B, C, ... R are $U_A(\theta)$, $U_B(\theta)$, ... $U_R(\theta)$
respectively. In general these kinds of problems are very difficult. We
will consider an important special case of the situation by assuming
$U_A'(\theta) \geq U_B'(\theta) \ldots \geq U_R'(\theta)$ for all θ. (We can weaken this condition
by assuming $U_A(\theta) - U_B(\theta)$, $U_B(\theta) - U_C(\theta)$, ... $U_{R-1}(\theta) - U_R(\theta)$ are all

non-decreasing functions of θ.) An example of this special case may be
that job A is group leader, job B is system analyst, job C is programmer
and job R is rejection. After several years experience a programmer may
be promoted to a system analyst and a system analyst may be promoted to a
group leader. Thus jobs A,B,C, R may satisfy our conditions.

The following theorem shows the existence of the multiple cut-scores,
a result in Karlin and Rubin (1956).

<u>Theorem 4</u>. Under the conditions of theorem 1. If $U_A(\theta) - U_B(\theta)$,
$U_B(\theta) - U_C(\theta), \ldots U_{R-1}(\theta) - U_R(\theta)$ are all non-decreasing functions of θ,
then there exists

$C_A \geq C_B \geq \ldots \geq C_{R-1}$ such that

$$\text{if} \quad T(x) > C_A \text{ then } V_A(T(x)) = V_*(T(x))$$
$$\text{if } C_A > T(x) > C_B \text{ then } V_B(T(x)) = V_*(T(x))$$
$$\text{if } C_B > T(x) > C_C \text{ then } V_C(T(x)) = V_*(T(x))$$

(10)

$$\vdots$$

$$\text{if } C_{R-1} > T(x) \quad \text{then } V_R(T(x)) = V_*(T(x))$$
$$\text{where } V_*(T(x)) = \text{Max}\left\{V_A(T(x)), V_B(T(x)), \ldots, V_R(T(x))\right\}.$$

From the above result we can see very clearly that if we have an applicant, then we use C_A, C_B,... C_{R-1} as cut-scores and decide to which job to assign him. For example if $T(x) > C_A$ then we assign the applicant to job A, if $C_A > T(x) > C_B$ then we assign the applicant to job B ... etc. Intuitively we assign a person with higher score to a job that gives higher marginal utility (for example, job A). Generally we find that C_A, C_B,... C_{R-1} are distinct. Thus every job has a chance to receive the applicant. The following theorem shows how to find C_A, C_B,..., C_{R-1}. Its proof can be obtained by repeatedly applying theorem 1.

Theorem 5: Under the conditions of theorem 4. Assume $E[U_A(\theta) - U_B(\theta) \mid T(x)]$, $E[U_B(\theta) - U_C(\theta) \mid T(x)]$,..., $E[U_{R-1}(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x)]$ are continuous functions of $T(x)$, let

$$E[U_A(\theta) - U_B(\theta) \mid T(x) = C_A] = 0$$
$$E[U_B(\theta) - U_C(\theta) \mid T(x) = C_B] = 0$$
$$\vdots$$
$$E[U_{R-1}(\theta) - U_R(\theta) \mid T(x) = C_{R-1}] = 0 \tag{11}$$

If $C_A \geq C_B \geq ,... C_{R-1}$, then the equation (10) holds. Hence, C_A, C_B,...,C_{R-1} are the cut-scores.

For the conditions $C_A \geq C_B \geq ... \geq C_{R-1}$ in theorem 5 , if one of the equalities is violated, then the corresponding scores for the solutions in (11) are not the cut-scores. Suppose that there are only three jobs, A, B, and C. Let C_A and C_B be the solutions of (11) such that $C_B \geq C_A$, and let

$$E[U_A(\theta) - U_C(\theta) \mid T(x) = C_{AC}] = 0$$

$$\tag{12}$$

Then $C_B \geq C_{AC} \geq C_A$ and

if $T(x) \geq C_{AC}$ then $V_A(T(x)) = V_*(T(x))$

if $T(x) \leq C_{AC}$ then $V_C(T(x)) = V_*(T(x))$.

Thus, C_{AC} of the equation (12) is the only cut-score, and job B
does not have a chance to receive any applicant.

The condition $U'_A(\theta) \geq U'_B(\theta) \geq \ldots \geq U'_R(\theta)$ or the alternative
$U_A(\theta) - U_B(\theta)$, $U_B(\theta) - U_C(\theta)$, $\ldots U_{R-1}(\theta) - U_R(\theta)$ are all non-decreasing
functions of θ can be relaxed to include important additional cases.
Suppose that for $\theta > \theta_I$, $U_A(\theta) - U_B(\theta)$ is a positive function
of θ; for $\theta_I > \theta > \theta_{II}$, $U_B(\theta) - U_C(\theta)$ is a positive function of θ, etc.
Suppose further that a multiple cut-score solution yields cut-scores
C_A, and C_B, then it is evident that the computed solution is a valid
solution. Thus we see that the required monotonicity properties are
local rather than global properties.

The monotonicity assumption on utility differences in the weaker
form considered above seems eminently reasonable in both employment and
educational applications. Consider an underlying "general ability, θ"
and the occupational careers of physicist (A), electrical engineer (B),
and electrician (C). Then the utility structure pictured in figure 2
may be valid.

Insert Figure 2 About Here

The following example demonstrates the use of cut-scores in multiple job assignments. Suppose there are three jobs. A, B and C are available and suppose that the utilities of jobs A, B, and C are

$$U_A (y) = \Phi\left(\frac{y-2.6}{1}\right)$$

$$U_B (y) = \Phi\left(\frac{y-2.2}{2}\right)$$

and

$$U_C (y) = \Phi\left(\frac{y-2}{3}\right)$$

Using the 1968 data on college 7 of ACT scores given in section 2, the expected utilities for each job are given in column 2 to column 4 of Table 2. Column 5 is the difference of column 2 and column 3, and column 6 is the difference of column 3 and column 4. Column 5 and column 6 change sign at x = 30 and x = 24, respectively. The optimal assignment is

       If $x \geq 30$ assign applicant to job A.

       If $30 > x \geq 24$ assign applicant to job B.

       If $24 > x$ assign applicant to job C.

<u>Insert Table 2 Near Here</u>

Again consider N applicants and without loss of generality
assume their test score satisfies $T(x_1) \geq T(x_2) \geq \ldots \geq T(x_N)$.
We may have the following situations:

(1) quota free for all jobs, i.e. we can accept as many applicants
as we want for each job.

(2) We want to accept exactly $N_A, N_B, N_C \ldots N_R$ applicants for jobs
$A, B, C, \ldots R$ respectively. So in this case we assume
$N_A + N_B + N_C + \ldots + N_R = N$.

(3) For every job $A, B, C, \ldots R$ we want to accept at most N_A, N_B, $\ldots$
N_R respectively. So in this case we assume $N_A + N_B + N_C + \ldots + N_R \geq N$.

Before we find optimal decision procedure for the above situations
we should notice that (3) is the most general one. In situation (3) if
we have the additional condition that $N_A = N_B = N_C \ldots = N_R = N$ then (3)
specializes to (1). If $N_A + N_B + \ldots + N_R = N$ then we can also see (3)
specializes to (2). In the following we will consider situation (3)
first and discuss situations (1) and (2) in the corollary at the end
of this section.

Before we develop an optimal decision procedure for situation (3)
we need some definitions and preliminary results.

We can illustrate situation (3) as follows
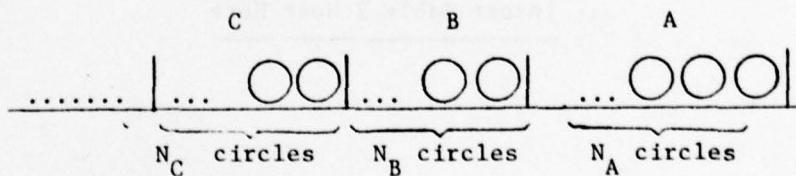
where $A, B, C \ldots$ are job categories, and the number of circles
under each job is the number of openings for that job category. When
we assign an applicant to a job we put his number in the corresponding
circle. For example, the following picture represents our assigning

applicant 1 to job A, applicants 2 and 3 to job B.
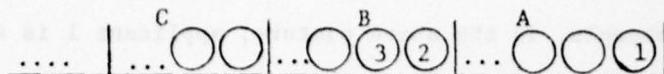
By theorem (3) of the previous section and the assumption that $T(x_1) \geq T(x_2) \ldots \geq T(x_N)$, we can see that an applicant with a higher score should occupy a position to the right of a lower score applicant. Thus, we will only consider assignments that satisfy this condition. The following assignment satisfies this condition.
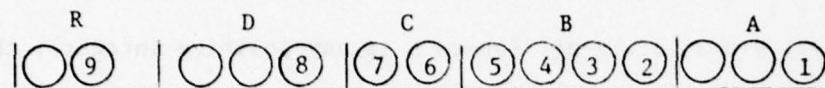
Here we have 9 applicants and $N_A = 3$, $N_B = 4$, $N_C = 2$, $N_D = 3$ and $N_R = 2$.

We can also put index on the openings in the way that openings in job A have index $1, 2, \ldots N_A$ and openings for job B have index $N_A + 1, \ldots N_A + N_B$ respectively.

After assignment of all applicants we need the following definition.

Definition Chain is a set of consecutive applicants such that the highest scoring applicant in the set occupies the first opening of the job he got. All the job openings between the one occupied by the highest score and the one occupied by the lowest score (in the chain) are all occupied by the members of the chain. And there are still opening(s) for the job that the lowest scored applicant in the chain got. Also, there are still opening(s) for the job just to the right of the opening(s) the highest scoring applicant got, if there are any.

For example, in the above picture, applicant 1 is a chain and the set of applicants 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 is also a chain.

From the above definition, we can have the following lemma.

Lemma 2: Suppose we have the optimal assignment of applicants $1,2,...N$. Let the highest scoring applicant in a chain be $i+1^{th}$ applicant. We assume there are K applicants in the chain occupying $v+1$, $v+2$,...$v+k$ indexed position. If we move $j+1$, $j+2$,...$j+\ell$ (where $i+1 \le j+1 \le j+\ell \le i+k$, i.e. all are in the chain) from positions $v+1$, $v+2$, ... $v+\ell$ to positions $v-n+1$, $v-n+2$, ... $v-n+\ell$ (where n is any positive integer), then the the total expected utility will decrease.

Proof: We first show that we shift $i+1$, $i+2$, ... $i+\ell$ applicants from $v+1$, $v+2$, ...$v+\ell$ to $v+n+1$, $v+n+2$, ... $v+n+\ell$ then the total expected utility will decrease or not change.

When $i+1$, $i+2$,...$i+\ell$ applicants shift from $v+1$, $v+2$,...$v+\ell$ to v, $v+1$,...$v+\ell-1$ we can see the total expected utility will reduce or not change because before the shift we already have optimal assignment.

Now $i+2$, $i+3$,...$i+\ell$ occupy positions $v+1$, $v+2$,...$v+\ell-1$, respectively. By theorem 2 of the previous section if we shift applicant $i+1$, $i+2$,...$i+\ell-1$ from positions $v+1$, $v+2$,...$v+\ell-1$ to v,$v+1$,...$v+\ell-2$ the total expected value will decrease or not change. We can see that shifting applicants $i+2$, $i+3$,...$i+\ell$ from $v+1$, $v+2$,...$v+\ell-1$ to v, $v+1$,...$v+\ell-2$ will reduce or not change total expected utility.

For those who occupy positions (note we only consider applicants $i+1$, $i+2$,...$i+k$) less than $v+1$ we don't consider them because the more to the right the less expected utility we will get from them.

Similarly, if we move i+3, i+4,...i+ℓ from v+1, v+2, ...v+ℓ-2
openings one position to the right the total expected utility will not
increase. Thus, we can see that moving i+1, i+2,... i+ℓ from positions
v+1, v+2, ... v+ℓ to v+1-n, v+2-n,...v+ℓ-n will not increase our total
expected utility.

Next we consider moving j+1, j+2,...j+ℓ applicants from v+1, v+2,...
v+ℓ to positions v-n+1, v-n+2,... v-n+ℓ. By the above result and
Theorem 2 of the previous section we can see this action will not
increase the total expected utility.

Now we are ready to show optimal decision procedure for situation
(3). The procedure is as follows:

We arrange the applicants according to their test scores and start
from the first person (who has the highest score) then the second,
third, etc... until the one who has the lowest test score using the
following assigning algorithm. We consider ith applicant with test score
$T(x_i)$ (i=1,2,...N).

(i) assign the applicant to the job that gives highest expected
utility.

(ii) if the job in (i) is filled (i.e., filled by some people who
have higher test scores than $T(x_i)$), then assign i to the same job as
(i-1)th applicant.

(iii) if the job in (ii) is also filled we have to consider two
possible ways: (1) assign i to the next job opening that has lower
marginal utility than the job (i-1) applicant was assigned or (2) assign
i to the same job as (i-1) applicant, but now this job accepts more
applicants than its limit. Thus, we shift all applicants in the chain

that contains (i-1)th applicant one position to the right. From these two ways we select the one that has higher expected utility.

The above decision procedure is optimal since:

When (i) is true we can see immediately we have assigned applicant 1,2,... i-1, i optimally because we assigned applicant 1,2,...i-1 and i optimally.

To consider (ii) we have to compare the assignment that satisfies the condition that an applicant with a higher score should occupy a position on the right. (This is another way of expressing Theorem 2 in the previous section).

We know applicant i has to occupy an opening at least to the right of the opening we originally assigned, or the new assignment will not increase our total expected utility.

Let the new arrangement satisfy the above conditions. We will shift our original arrangement in steps to the new arrangement such that each step our total expected utility will not increase. And thus our originally assignment has highest expected utility.

We first shift the last chain in our original arrangement one position to the right. By (2) in Lemma 2, our total expected utility will not increase (note ith applicant does not change job, although he changes openings). Now we shift this chain to the right until ith applicant occupies the same position as a new arrangement. Every shift, by (3) in Lemma 2, will not increase total expected utility. We now shift all except i to the right until i-1th applicant occupies the position in the new arrangement. We now move applicants in the last chain, except i-1 and i to the right until

i-2th applicant occupies the positions in the new arrangement and each step will not increase our total expected utility, thus (ii) gets the highest expected utility.

It can be shown that (iii) is optimal by exactly the same way as in (ii).

Corollary:

(1) For a quota free situation, the optimal decision procedure is to assign each applicant to the job that gives highest expected utility.

(2) For situation (2), the optimal decision procedure is to assign applicant $1, 2, \ldots N_A$ to job A, N_A+1, N_A+2, $\ldots N_A+N_B$ to job B,..., and the last N_R applicants to job R.

The above corollary is a direct result of our previous decision procedure.

Selections Considering Applicant's Preference

In this part, we take applicant's preference into consideration.
Suppose we have two jobs and N applicants. Every applicant states
which job he prefers. Let these two jobs be A and B and each has
n_A and n_B openings. We further assume $n_A + n_B \geq N$ and the decision
maker know each applicant's preference between jobs A and B. A
decision maker assigns each applicant to either job A or B but not
both

Let $U_1(\theta)$ and $U_2(\theta)$ satisfy:

$$U_1(\theta) \geq U_2(\theta) \tag{2}$$

$$U_1'(\theta) \geq U_2'(\theta) \tag{3}$$

Now we define utility functions. Suppose ith applicant prefers
job A to B. We assume

$$U_{iA}(\theta) = U_1(\theta)$$

$$U_{iB}(\theta) = U_2(\theta)$$

where $U_{iA}(\theta)$ and $U_{iB}(\theta)$ are the utility function if we assign the
ith applicant to jobs A and B respectively.

Similarly, if jth applicant prefers job B to A, then

$$U_{jA}(\theta) = U_2(\theta)$$

$$U_{jB}(\theta) = U_1(\theta)$$

Every applicant will have higher utility if we assign him to the job
be perferred. Thus assumption (2) is very reasonable. We will see
the case when (3) is not true later in this part.

A trivial special case is when $n_A = n_B = N$, then we assign every applicant to the job he prefers.

Under the assumptions, the decision procedure that will maximize the total sum of expected utility is as follows:

Arrange the applicants according to $T(x_1) \geq T(x_2) \ldots \geq T(x_n)$. Starting from the first to the last applicant, assign each (say ith) applicant to the job he preferred, if there is no opening for that job (say already filled by 1, 2, 3 ... i - 1 applicant) then assign him to the other job.

Next we prove the above algorithm maximizes the total expected utility. Suppose at the end job A still has openings, then we cannot move any applicants from job B to A. Those in job B prefer job B to A, (or they will be in job A), thus moving them to A will not increase our total expected utility. When job B still has openings we can prove optimality in the same way.

Next suppose we assign j to job A and k to job B, we show exchange of jobs between j and k will not increase our total expected utility. Without loss of generality we assume $T(x_j) > T(x_k)$, and thus j applicant prefers job A to job B. If k applicant prefers job B to job A, then j and k are happy and we should not exchange their jobs.

If k applicant also prefers job A to B then $U_{jA}(\theta) = U_{kA}(\theta) = U_1(\theta)$ and $U_B(\theta) = U_{kB}(\theta) = U_2(\theta)$. By Theorem 2, we have

$$V_A(T(x_j)) + V_B(T(x_k)) \geq V_A(T(x_k)) + V_B(T(x_j))$$

Thus exchange j and k's job will not increase total expected utility. Thus we have optimal decision procedure.

If we assume $U_1(\theta)$ and $U_2(\theta)$ satisfy:

$$U_1(\theta) \geq U_2(\theta) \tag{2}$$

$$U_2'(\theta) \geq U_1'(\theta) \tag{3}'$$

and when i prefers job A to B then $U_{iA}(\theta) = U_1(\theta)$ and $U_{iB}(\theta) = U_2(\theta)$.

Then the optimal decision procedure is as follows: Arrange $T(x_1) \geq T(x_2) \ldots \geq T(x_n)$, but now starting from Nth applicant (the one who has lowest test score) till the first applicant, assign any applicant to the job he preferred, if no opening there then assign him to the other job. The proof is the same as previous case.

In this case we honored lower score applicants first. This may not be acceptable in most of the real world cases.

Another situation is that $U_1'(\theta) = U_2'(\theta)$, i.e. $U_1(\theta)$ and $U_2(\theta)$ differ by a constant. Optimal decision procedure is started from any one applicant (each time arbitrary choose next applicant), if the job he preferred still has opening assign him to there if no opening, assign him to the other job. We can see in this case a lot of arrangements have maximum expected utility.
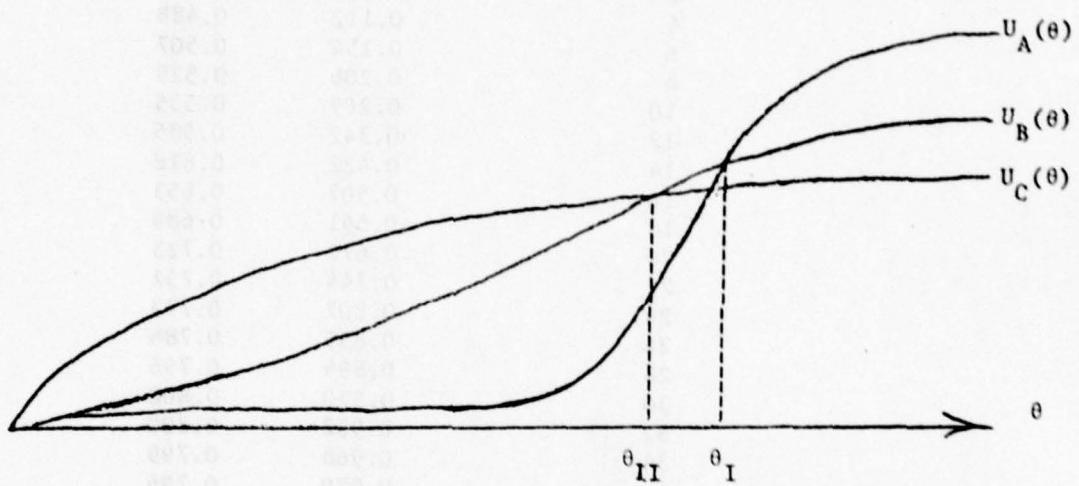
Figure 2

Table 1. The expected utilities for selection for two sample sizes at
the various points of the test scores.

	Expected Utilities	
Score	n = 105	n = 10
0	0.057	0.457
2	0.081	0.471
4	0.112	0.488
6	0.154	0.507
8	0.206	0.529
10	0.269	0.555
12	0.342	0.585
14	0.422	0.618
16	0.507	0.653
18	0.591	0.689
20	0.672	0.723
22	0.744	0.752
24	0.807	0.773
26	0.859	0.788
28	0.899	0.796
30	0.930	0.800
32	0.952	0.800
34	0.968	0.799
36	0.979	0.796

Table 2. The expected utilities and the differences of three normal
utilities

	Expected Utilities			Difference	
Score	U_A (y)	U_B (y)	U_C (y)	U_A (y) – U_B (y)	U_B (y) – U_C (y)
0	0.070	0.239	0.333	-0.169	-0.094
2	0.088	0.263	0.353	-0.176	-0.090
4	0.109	0.289	0.373	-0.180	-0.084
6	0.134	0.316	0.394	-0.182	-0.078
8	0.164	0.344	0.415	-0.181	-0.071
10	0.197	0.374	0.437	-0.176	-0.063
12	0.236	0.404	0.458	-0.168	-0.055
14	0.278	0.434	0.480	-0.157	-0.046
16	0.324	0.466	0.502	-0.142	-0.036
18	0.373	0.498	0.524	-0.125	-0.026
20	0.424	0.528	0.545	-0.105	-0.017
22	0.476	0.560	0.567	-0.083	-0.007
24	0.529	0.591	0.588	-0.061	0.002
26	0.582	0.621	0.609	-0.039	0.011
28	0.632	0.650	0.630	-0.018	0.020
30	0.680	0.679	0.651	0.002	0.028
32	0.725	0.706	0.670	0.019	0.036
34	0.766	0.732	0.690	0.034	0.043
36	0.803	0.757	0.709	0.046	0.049

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Navy

1   Dr. Ed Aiken
    Navy Personnel R&D Center
    San Diego, CA 92152

1   Dr. Jack R. Borsting
    Provost & Academic Dean
    U.S. Naval Postgraduate School
    Monterey, CA 93940

1   Dr. Robert Breaux
    Code N-71
    NAVTRAEQUIPCEN
    Orlando, FL 32813

1   MR. MAURICE CALLAHAN
    Pers 23a
    Bureau of Naval Personnel
    Washington, DC 20370

1   Dr. Richard Elster
    Department of Administrative Sciences
    Naval Postgraduate School
    Monterey, CA 93940

1   DR. PAT FEDERICO
    NAVY PERSONNEL R&D CENTER
    SAN DIEGO, CA 92152

1   Dr. Paul Foley
    Navy Personnel R&D Center
    San Diego, CA 92152

1   Dr. John Ford
    Navy Personnel R&D Center
    San Diego, CA 92152

1   CAPT. D.M. GRAGG, MC, USN
    HEAD, SECTION ON MEDICAL EDUCATION
    UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIV. OF THE
        HEALTH SCIENCES
    6917 ARLINGTON ROAD
    BETHESDA, MD 20014

1   Dr. Norman J. Kerr
    Chief of Naval Technical Training
    Naval Air Station Memphis (75)
    Millington, TN 38054

Navy

1   Dr. Leonard Kroeker
    Navy Personnel R&D Center
    San Diego, CA 92152

1   CHAIRMAN, LEADERSHIP & LAW DEPT.
    DIV. OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMMENT
    U.S. NAVAL ACADEMYY
    ANNAPOLIS, MD 21402

1   Dr. William L. Maloy
    Principal Civilian Advisor for
        Education and Training
    Naval Training Command, Code 00A
    Pensacola, FL 32508

1   CAPT Richard L. Martin
    USS Francis Marion (LPA-Z49)
    FPO New York, NY 09501

1   Dr. James McBride
    Code 301
    Navy Personnel R&D Center
    San Diego, CA 92152

1   DR. WILLIAM MONTAGUE
    LRDC
    UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
    3939 O'HARA STREET
    PITTSBURGH, PA 15213

1   Library
    Navy Personnel R&D Center
    San Diego, CA 92152

6   Commanding Officer
    Naval Research Laboratory
    Code 2627
    Washington, DC 20390

1   OFFICE OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL
    (CODE 26)
    DEPT. OF THE NAVY
    WASHINGTON, DC 20390

1   JOHN OLSEN
    CHIEF OF NAVAL EDUCATION &
        TRAINING SUPPORT
    PENSACOLA, FL 32509

Navy

1   Psychologist
    ONR Branch Office
    495 Summer Street
    Boston, MA 02210

1   Psychologist
    ONR Branch Office
    536 S. Clark Street
    Chicago, IL 60605

1   Office of Naval Research
    Code 200
    Arlington, VA 22217

1   Code 436
    Office of Naval Research
    Arlington, VA 22217

1   Office of Naval Research
    Code 437
    800 N. Quincy SStreet
    Arlington, VA 22217

5   Personnel & Training Research Programs
        (Code 458)
    Office of Naval Research
    Arlington, VA 22217

1   Psychologist
    OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH BRANCH
    223 OLD MARYLEBONE ROAD
    LONDON, NW, 15TH ENGLAND

1   Psychologist
    ONR Branch Office
    1030 East Green Street
    Pasadena, CA 91101

1   Scientific Director
    Office of Naval Research
    Scientific Liaison Group/Tokyo
    American Embassy
    APO San Francisco, CA 96503

1   Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
    Research, Development, and Studies Branc
        (OP-102)
    Washington, DC 20350

Navy

1   Scientific Advisor to the Chief of
        Naval Personnel (Pers-Or)
    Naval Bureau of Personnel
    Room 4410, Arlington Annex
    Washington, DC 20370

1   LT Frank C. Petho, MSC, USNR (Ph.D)
    Code L51
    Naval Aerospace Medical Research Laborat
    Pensacola, FL 32508

1   DR. RICHARD A. POLLAK
    ACADEMIC COMPUTING CENTER
    U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY
    ANNAPOLIS, MD 21402

1   Mr. Arnold Rubenstein
    Naval Personnel Support Technology
    Naval Material Command (08T244)
    Room 1044, Crystal Plaza #5
    2221 Jefferson Davis Highway
    Arlington, VA 20360

1   A. A. SJOHOLM
    TECH. SUPPORT, CODE 201
    NAVY PERSONNEL R& D CENTER
    SAN DIEGO, CA 92152

1   Mr. Robert Smith
    Office of Chief of Naval Operations
    OP-987E
    Washington, DC 20350

1   Dr. Alfred F. Smode
    Training Analysis & Evaluation Group
        (TAEG)
    Dept. of the Navy
    Orlando, FL 32813

1   Dr. Richard Sorensen
    Navy Personnel R&D Center
    San Diego, CA 92152

1   CDR Charles J. Theisen, JR. MSC, USN
    Head Human Factors Engineering Div.
    Naval Air Development Center
    Warminster, PA 18974

Navy

.1   W. Gary Thomson
     Naval Ocean Systems Center
     Code 7132
     San Diego, CA 92152

1   Dr. Ronald Weitzman
     Department of Administrative Sciences
     U. S. Naval Postgraduate School
     Monterey, CA 93940

1   DR. MARTIN F. WISKOFF
     NAVY PERSONNEL R& D CENTER
     SAN DIEGO, CA 92152

Army

1   Technical Director
     U. S. Army Research Institute for the
             Behavioral and Social Sciences
     5001 Eisenhower Avenue
     Alexandria, VA 22333

1   HQ USAREUE & 7th Army
     CDCSOPS
     USAAREUE Director of GED
     APO New York 09403

1   DR. RALPH DUSEK
     U.S. ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
     5001 EISENHOWER AVENUE
     ALEXANDRIA, VA 22333

1   Dr. Myron Fischl
     U.S. Army Research Institute for the
             Social and Behavioral Sciences
     5001 Eisenhower Avenue
     Alexandria, VA 22333

1   Dr. Beatrice J. Farr
     Army Research Institute (PERI-OK)
     5001 Eisenhower Avenue
     Alexandria, VA 22333

1   Dr. Milt Maier
     U.S. ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
     5001 EISENHOWER AVENUE
     ALEXANDRIA, VA 22333

1   Dr. Harold F. O'Neil, Jr.
     ATTN: PERI-OK
     5001 EISENHOWER AVENUE
     ALEXANDRIA, VA 22333

1   Dr. Robert Ross
     U.S. Army Research Institute for the
             Social and Behavioral Sciences
     5001 Eisenhower Avenue
     Alexandria, VA 22333

1   Dr. Robert Sasmor
     U. S. Army Research Institute for the
             Behavioral and Social Sciences
     5001 Eisenhower Avenue
     Alexandria, VA 22333

Army   Air Force

1   Director, Training Development   1   Air Force Human Resources Lab
    U.S. Army Administration Center   AFHRL/PED
    ATTN: Dr. Sherrill   Brooks AFB, TX 78235
    Ft. Benjamin Harrison, IN 46218
                                          1   Air University Library
1   Dr. Frederick Steinheiser   AUL/LSE 76/443
    U. S. Army Research Institute   Maxwell AFB, AL 36112
    5001 Eisenhower Avenue
    Alexandria, VA 22333   1   Dr. Philip De Leo
                                              AFHRL/TT
1   Dr. Joseph Ward   Lowry AFB, CO 80230
    U.S. Army Research Institute
    5001 Eisenhower Avenue   1   DR. G. A. ECKSTRAND
    Alexandria, VA 22333   AFHRL/AS
                                              WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, OH 45433

                                          1   Dr. Genevieve Haddad
                                              Program Manager
                                              Life Sciences Directorate
                                              AFOSR
                                              Bolling AFB, DC 20332

                                          1   CDR. MERCER
                                              CNET LIAISON OFFICER
                                              AFHRL/FLYING TRAINING DIV.
                                              WILLIAMS AFB, AZ 85224

                                          1   Dr. Ross L. Morgan (AFHRL/ASR)
                                              Wright -Patterson AFB
                                              Ohio 45433

                                          1   Dr. Roger Pennell
                                              AFHRL/TT
                                              Lowry AFB, CO 80230

                                          1   Personnel Analysis Division
                                              HQ USAF/DPXXA
                                              Washington, DC 20330

                                          1   Research Branch
                                              AFMPC/DPMYP
                                              Randolph AFB, TX 78148

                                          1   Dr. Malcolm Ree
                                              AFHRL/PED
                                              Brooks AFB, TX 78235

Air Force   Marines

1   Dr. Marty Rockway (AFHRL/TT)   1   H. William Greenup
     Lowry AFB   Education Advisor (E031)
     Colorado 80230   Education Center, MCDEC
                                               Quantico, VA 22134

1   Jack A. Thorpe, Capt, USAF
     Program Manager   1   Director, Office of Manpower Utilization
     Life Sciences Directorate   HQ, Marine Corps (MPU)
     AFOSR   BCB, Bldg. 2009
     Bolling AFB, DC 20332   Quantico, VA 22134

1   Brian K. Waters, LCOL, USAF   1   DR. A.L. SLAFKOSKY
     Air University   SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR (CODE RD-1)
     Maxwell AFB   HQ, U.S. MARINE CORPS
     Montgomery, AL 36112   WASHINGTON, DC 20380

CoastGuard   Other DoD

1   Mr. Richard Lanterman   12 Defense Documentation Center
     PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH (G-P-1/62)   Cameron Station, Bldg. 5
     U.S. COAST GUARD HQ   Alexandria, VA   22314
     WASHINGTON, DC   20590   Attn: TC

1   Dr. Thomas Warm   1 Dr. Dexter Fletcher
     U. S. Coast Guard Institute   ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY
     P. O. Substation 18   1400 WILSON BLVD.
     Oklahoma City, OK 73169   ARLINGTON, VA   22209

                                             1 Dr. William Graham
                                                Testing Directorate
                                                MEPCOM
                                                Ft. Sheridan, IL 60037

                                             1 Military Assistant for Training and
                                                     Personnel Technology
                                                Office of the Under Secretary of Defense
                                                     for Research & Engineering
                                                Room 3D129, The Pentagon
                                                Washington, DC 20301

                                             1 MAJOR Wayne Sellman, USAF
                                                Office of the Assistant Secretary
                                                     of Defense (MRA&L)
                                                3B930 The Pentagon
                                                Washington, DC 20301

Civil Govt   Civil Govt

1   Dr. Susan Chipman   1   Dr. Thomas G. Sticht
    Basic Skills Program   Basic Skills Program
    National Institute of Education   National Institute of Education
    1200 19th Street NW   1200 19th Street NW
    Washington, DC 20208   Washington, DC 20208

1   Dr. William Gorham, Director   1   Dr. Vern W. Urry
    Personnel R&D Center   Personnel R&D Center
    Office of Personnel Managment   Office of Personnel Managment
    1900 E Street NW   1900 E Street NW
    Washington, DC 20415   Washington, DC 20415

1   Dr. Joseph I. Lipson   1   Dr. Frank Withrow
    Division of Science Education   U. S. Office of Education
    Room W-638   400 6th Street SW
    National Science Foundation   Washington, DC 20202
    Washington, DC 20550
                                         1   Dr. Joseph L. Young, Director
1   Dr. John Mays   Memory & Cognitive Processes
    National Institute of Education   National Science Foundation
    1200 19th Street NW   Washington, DC 20550
    Washington, DC 20208

1   Dr. Arthur Melmed
    National Intitute of Education
    1200 19th Street NW
    Washington, DC 20208

1   Dr. Andrew R. Molnar
    Science Education Dev.
       and Research
    National Science Foundation
    Washington, DC 20550

1   Dr. Lalitha P. Sanathanan
    Environmental Impact Studies Division
    Argonne National Laboratory
    9700 S. Cass Avenue
    Argonne, IL 60439

1   Dr. Jeffrey Schiller
    National Institute of Education
    1200 19th St. NW
    Washington, DC 20208

Non Govt   Non Govt

1   Dr. Earl A. Alluisi   1   Dr. Robert Brennan
    HQ, AFHRL (AFSC)   American College Testing Programs
    Brooks AFB, TX 78235   P. O. Box 168
                                                Iowa City, IA 52240
1   Dr. Erling B. Anderson
    University of Copenhagen   1   DR. C. VICTOR BUNDERSON
    Studiestraedt   WICAT INC.
    Copenhagen   UNIVERSITY PLAZA, SUITE 10
    DENMARK   1160 SO. STATE ST.
                                                OREM, UT 84057
1   1 psychological research unit
    Dept. of Defense (Army Office)   1   Dr. John B. Carroll
    Campbell Park Offices   Psychometric Lab
    Canberra   ACT 2600, Australia   Univ. of No. Carolina
                                                Davie Hall 013A
1   Dr. Alan Baddeley   Chapel Hill, NC 27514
    Medical Research Council
        Applied Psychology Unit   1   Charles Myers Library
    15 Chaucer Road   Livingstone House
    Cambridge CB2 2EF   Livingstone Road
    ENGLAND   Stratford
                                                London E15 2LJ
1   Dr. Isaac Bejar   ENGLAND
    Educational Testing Service
    Princeton, NJ 08450   1   Dr. John Chiorini
                                                Litton-Mellonics
1   Dr. Warner Birice   Box 1286
    Streitkraefteamt   Springfield, VA 22151
    Rosenberg 5300
    Bonn, West Germany D-5300   1   Dr. Kenneth E. Clark
                                                College of Arts & Sciences
1   Dr. R. Darrel Bock   University of Rochester
    Department of Education   River Campus Station
    University of Chicago   Rochester, NY 14627
    Chicago, IL 60637
                                            1   Dr. Norman Cliff
1   Dr. Nicholas A. Bond   Dept. of Psychology
    Dept. of Psychology   Univ. of So. California
    Sacramento State College   University Park
    600 Jay Street   Los Angeles, CA 90007
    Sacramento, CA 95819
                                            1   Dr. William Coffman
1   Dr. David G. Bowers   Iowa Testing Programs
    Institute for Social Research   University of Iowa
    University of Michigan   Iowa City, IA 52242
    Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Non Govt   Non Govt

1   Dr. Meredith Crawford   1   Dr. Edwin A. Fleishman
    Department of Engineering Administration   Advanced Research Resources Organ.
    George Washington University   Suite 900
    Suite 805   4330 East West Highway
    2101 L Street N. W.   Washington, DC 20014
    Washington, DC 20037

                                     1   Dr. John R. Frederiksen
1   Dr. Hans Cronbag   Bolt Beranek & Newman
    Education Research Center   50 Moulton Street
    University of Leyden   Cambridge, MA 02138
    Boerhaavelaan 2
    Leyden   1   DR. ROBERT GLASER
    The NETHERLANDS   LRDC
                                             UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
1   Dr. Emmanuel Donchin   3939 O'HARA STREET
    Department of Psychology   PITTSBURGH, PA   15213
    University of Illinois
    Champaign, IL 61820   1   Dr. Ross Greene
                                             CTB/McGraw Hill
1   MAJOR I. N. EVONIC   Del Monte Research Park
    CANADIAN FORCES PERS. APPLIED RESEARCH   Monterey, CA 93940
    1107 AVENUE ROAD
    TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA   1   Dr. Alan Gross
                                             Center for Advanced Study in Education
1   Dr. Leonard Feldt   City University of New York
    Lindquist Center for Measurment   New York, NY 10036
    University of Iowa
    Iowa City, IA 52242   1   Dr. Ron Hambleton
                                             School of Education
1   Dr. Richard L. Ferguson   University of Massechusetts
    The American College Testing Program   Amherst, MA 01002
    P.O. Box 168
    Iowa City, IA 52240   1   Dr. Chester Harris
                                             School of Education
1   Dr. Victor Fields   University of California
    Dept. of Psychology   Santa Barbara, CA 93106
    Montgomery College
    Rockville, MD 20850   1   Dr. Lloyd Humphreys
                                             Department of Psychology
1   Dr. Gerhardt Fischer   University of Illinois
    Liebigasse 5   Champaign, IL 61820
    Vienna 1010
    Austria   1   Library
                                             HumRRO/Western Division
1   Dr. Donald Fitzgerald   27857 Berwick Drive
    University of New England   Carmel, CA 93921
    Armidale, New South Wales 2351
    AUSTRALIA

Non Govt

1   Dr. Steven Hunka
    Department of Education
    University of Alberta
    Edmonton, Alberta
    CANADA

1   Dr. Earl Hunt
    Dept. of Psychology
    University of Washington
    Seattle, WA 98105

1   Dr. Huynh Huynh
    Department of Education
    University of South Carolina
    Columbia, SC 29208

1   Dr. Carl J. Jensema
    Gallaudet College
    Kendall Green
    Washington, DC 20002

1   Dr. Arnold F. Kanarick
    Honeywell, Inc.
    2600 Ridgeway Pkwy
    Minneapolis, MN 55413

1   Dr. John A. Keats
    University of Newcastle
    Newcastle, New South Wales
    AUSTRALIA

1   Mr. Marlin Kroger
    1117 Via Goleta
    Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274

1   LCOL.   C.R.J. LAFLEUR
    PERSONNEL APPLIED RESEARCH
    NATIONAL DEFENSE HQS
    101 COLONEL BY DRIVE
    OTTAWA, CANADA   K1A OK2

1   Dr. Michael Levine
    Department of Educational Psychology
    University of Illinois
    Champaign, IL 61820

Non Govt

1   Faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen
    Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
    Oude Boteringestraat
    Groningen
    NETHERLANDS

1   Dr. Robert Linn
    College of Education
    University of Illinois
    Urbana, IL 61801

1   Dr. Frederick M. Lord
    Educational Testing Service
    Princeton, NJ 03540

1   Dr. Gary Marco
    Educational Testing Service
    Princeton, NJ 08450

1   Dr. Scott Maxwell
    Department of Psychology
    University of Houston
    Houston, TX 77025

1   Dr. Sam Mayo
    Loyola University of Chicago
    Chicago, IL 60601

1   Dr. James A. Paulson
    Portland State University
    P.O. Box 751
    Portland, OR 97207

1   MR. LUIGI PETRULLO
    2431 N. EDGEWOOD STREET
    ARLINGTON, VA 22207

1   DR. STEVEN M. PINE
    4950 Douglas Avenue
    Golden Valley, MN 55416

1   DR. DIANE M. RAMSEY-KLEE
    R-K RESEARCH & SYSTEM DESIGN
    3947 RIDGEMONT DRIVE
    MALIBU, CA 90265

Non Govt   Non Govt

1   MIN. RET. M. RAUCH   1   PROF. FUMIKO SAMEJIMA
    P II 4   DEPT. OF PSYCHOLOGY
    BUNDESMINISTERIUM DER VERTEIDIGUNG   UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
    POSTFACH 161   KNOXVILLE, TN 37916
    53 BONN 1, GERMANY
                                        1   Dr. Kazao Shigemasu
1   Dr. Peter B. Read   University of Tohoku
    Social Science Research Council   Department of Educational Psychology
    605 Third Avenue   Kawauchi, Sendai 982
    New York, NY 10016   JAPAN

1   Dr. Mark D. Reckase   1   Dr. Richard Snow
    Educational Psychology Dept.   School of Education
    University of Missouri-Columbia   Stanford University
    12 Hill Hall   Stanford, CA 94305
    Columbia, MO 65201
                                        1   Dr. Robert Sternberg
1   Dr. Andrew M. Rose   Dept. of Psychology
    American Institutes for Research   Yale University
    1055 Thomas Jefferson St. NW   Box 11A, Yale Station
    Washington, DC 20007   New Haven, CT 06520

1   Dr. Leonard L. Rosenbaum, Chairman 1   DR. PATRICK SUPPES
    Department of Psychology   INSTITUTE FOR MATHEMATICAL STUDIES IN
    Montgomery College   THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
    Rockville, MD 20850   STANFORD UNIVERSITY
                                            STANFORD, CA 94305
1   Dr. Ernst Z. Rothkopf
    Bell Laboratories   1   Dr. Hariharan Swaminathan
    600 Mountain Avenue   Laboratory of Psychometric and
    Murray Hill, NJ 07974   Evaluation Research
                                            School of Education
1   Dr. Donald Rubin   University of Massachusetts
    Educational Testing Service   Amherst, MA 01003
    Princeton, NJ 08450
                                        1   Dr. Brad Sympson
1   Dr. Larry Rudner   Office of Data Analysis Research
    Gallaudet College   Educational Testing Service
    Kendall Green   Princeton, NJ 03541
    Washington, DC 20002
                                        1   Dr. Kikumi Tatsuoka
1   Dr. J. Ryan   Computer Based Education Research
    Department of Education   Laboratory
    University of South Carolina   252 Engineering Research Laboratory
    Columbia, SC 29208   University of Illinois
                                            Urbana, IL 61801

Non Govt   Non Govt

1   Dr. Maurice Tatsuoka   1   Dr. J. Arthur Woodward
     Department of Educational Psychology   Department of Psychology
     University of Illinois   University of California
     Champaign, IL 61801   Los Angeles, CA 90024

1   Dr. David Thissen   1   Dr. Robert Woud
     Department of Psychology   School Examination Department
     University of Kansas   University of London
     Lawrence, KS 66044   66-72 Gower Street
                                                  London WCIE 6EE
1   Dr. Robert Tsutakawa   ENGLAND
     Dept. of Statistics
     University of MIssouri   1   Dr. Karl Zinn
     Columbia, MO 65201   Center for research on Learning
                                                    and Teaching
1   Dr. J. Uhlaner   University of Michigan
     Perceptronics, Inc.   Ann Arbor, MI 48104
     6271 Variel Avenue
     Woodland Hills, CA 91364

1   Dr. Howard Wainer
     Bureau of Social SCience Research
     1990 M Street, N. W.
     Washington, DC 20036

1   DR. THOMAS WALLSTEN
     PSYCHOMETRIC LABORATORY
     DAVIE HALL 013A
     UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROL
     CHAPEL HILL, NC   27514

1   Dr. David J. Weiss
     N660 Elliott Hall
     University of Minnesota
     75 E. River Road
     Minneapolis, MN 55455

1   DR. SUSAN E. WHITELY
     PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
     UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
     LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66044

1   Dr. Wolfgang Wildgrube
     Streitkraefteamt
     Rosenberg 5300
     Bonn, West Germany D-5300